



## P4-02: Code of Conduct Policy

At Queanbeyan & District Preschool Association (QDPA) we believe in maintaining an inclusive and welcoming environment and workplace that motivates and facilitates personal growth and development for staff and educators. The values that underpin our work ethic include equality, respect, integrity, and responsibility. QDPA is committed to adhere to the ECA Code of Ethics (2016) which is based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1991) and provides a framework for the reflection about the ethical responsibilities of early childhood professionals.

QDPA is committed to creating and maintaining an environment that promotes the safety of all children and embeds the [National Principles for Child Safe Organisations](#). All staff and volunteers are responsible for promoting a culture of safety and wellbeing to minimise the risk of child abuse or harm to children whilst promoting children’s sense of security and belonging.

### NATIONAL QUALITY STANDARD (NQS)

QUALITY AREA 4: STAFFING ARRANGEMENTS		
4.1	Staffing arrangements	Staffing arrangements enhance children's learning and development.
4.1.2	Continuity of staff	Every effort is made for children to experience continuity of educators at the service.
4.2	Professionalism	Management, educators, and staff are collaborative, respectful, and ethical.
4.2.1	Professional collaboration	Management, educators, and staff work with mutual respect and collaboratively, and challenge and learn from each other, recognising each other’s strengths and skills.
4.2.2	Professional Standards	Professional standards guide practice, interactions, and relationships.
QUALITY AREA 7: GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP		
7.1.1	Service philosophy and purpose	A statement of philosophy guides all aspects of the service’s operations.
7.1.3	Roles and responsibilities	Roles and responsibilities are clearly defined, and understood, and support effective decision-making and operation of the service.



EDUCATION AND CARE SERVICES NATIONAL REGULATIONS	
82	Tobacco, drug, and alcohol-free environment
84	Awareness of child protection law
155	Interactions with children
168	Education and care services must have policies and procedures
170	Policies and procedures to be followed

## RELATED POLICIES

Child Protection Policy	Professional Development Policy
Child Safe Environment Policy	Record Keeping and Retention Policy
Dealing with Complaints Policy	Recruitment Policy
Interactions with Children, Family and Staff Policy	Respect for Children Policy
Out of hours babysitting Policy	Responsible Person Policy
Photograph Policy	Staffing Arrangements Policy
Privacy and Confidentiality Policy	Social Media Policy
	Tobacco, Drug and Alcohol-Free Policy
	Work Health and Safety Policy

## PURPOSE

QDPA aim to establish a common understanding of workplace standards and ethics expected of all employees of the Association. QDPA aim to ensure positive working relationships are formed between all educators and management, promoting dignity and respect by avoiding behaviour, which is or may be perceived as harassing, bullying, or intimidating. Educators and management will always conduct themselves in an ethical manner and strive to ensure that all interactions are positive and respectful and are in accordance with the Association’s values and philosophy.

QDPA takes every reasonable effort to accommodate the diversity of all children in implementing the Child Safe Standards. We are committed to the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. We recognise the importance of and responsibility for, ensuring QDPA provides a safe and supportive environment which respects and fosters the rights and wellbeing of children enrolled in our programs. We are dedicated in promoting cultural safety for Indigenous and Torres Strait Islander children, cultural safety for children from culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds and to providing a safe environment for children with a disability.



## SCOPE

This policy applies to staff, management, Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, students, families, children, and visitors (including contractors) of QDPA.

## IMPLEMENTATION

The Approved Provider, Nominated Supervisor, educators and staff, volunteers, and students will adhere to the Early Childhood Australian Code of Ethics, Education and Care Services National Regulations and National Quality Standard, Child Safe Standards and Service policies and procedures at all times, promoting positive interactions both within the Association and the local community.

## RESPECT FOR PEOPLE AND THE SERVICE

- Employees and management are committed to the Association's philosophy and values, inclusive of best practice in early childhood education and building positive partnership with children, families, and staff.
- Our Service has developed a *Statement of Commitment to Child Safety and Wellbeing* to demonstrate a strong culture of child safety within QDPA.
- Employees and management adhere to our Child safe policies including *Child Safe Environment Policy* and *Child Protection Policy*, at all times and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse and harm.
- Employees and management understand that child safety is everyone's responsibility.
- Employees are committed to valuing and promoting the safety, health, and wellbeing of employees, volunteers, children, and families.
- Employees and management promote the cultural safety, participation, and empowerment of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children and staff to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Employees and management promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of children and staff with culturally and/or linguistically diverse backgrounds to support children to express their culture and enjoy their cultural rights.
- Employees and management promote the safety, participation, and empowerment of children and staff with a disability.
- Effective, open, and respectful reciprocal communication and feedback between employees, children, families, and management is conveyed.
- It is important to treat colleagues, children, and families with respect. Bullying or insulting behaviour, including verbal and non-verbal aggression, abusive, threatening, or derogatory language or intimidation towards other employees, children, visitors, or families is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.



- Employees are committed to an Equal Opportunity workplace and culture which values the knowledge, experience, and professionalism of all employees, team members, and managers, and the diverse heritage of our families and children.
- Employees and management respect the privacy of children and their families by keeping all information about child protection concerns confidential and only share information to promote child wellbeing or safety and/or manage risk of family violence with other Information Sharing Entities (IES) as per state/territory legislation.
- QDPA will conduct a comprehensive probation and induction orientation program for all new employees, volunteers, and students to include awareness of their roles and responsibilities in relation to Child Safe practices.
- It is important employees and management listen and respond to the views and concerns of children particularly if they are telling you that they or another child has been abused or are worried about their safety or the safety of another.

### EXPECTATIONS OF EMPLOYEES

#### EMPLOYEES WILL:

- ensure their work is carried out proficiently, harmoniously, and effectively.
- act in a professional and respectful manner at all times whilst at work, giving their full attention to their responsibilities and adhering to all QDPA policies, procedures, Child Safe Standards, Education and Care Services National Law and National Regulations, and the National Quality Standard
- act honestly and exercise attentiveness in all Preschool operations.
- carry out all lawful directions, retaining the right to question any direction which they consider to be unethical. If uncertain they can seek advice from the Nominated Supervisor, Approved Provider, or the Ombudsman
- uphold the rights of children and always prioritise their needs.
- treat all children and young people with respect.
- promote the wellbeing and safety of children and take all reasonable steps to protect children from abuse.
- provide adequate supervision of children at all times.
- understand their legislative responsibility as mandatory reporters to report any allegation of child abuse, neglect, or possible risk of harm to management or Child Protection authority.
- understand their legislative responsibility to report any inappropriate action of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as part of the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- participate in all compulsory training, including update of Child Protection training every 12-24 months.
- report any instances of suspected corrupt conduct, mismanagement of government funds or other serious allegation to the appropriate agency ([tipoffline@education.gov.au](mailto:tipoffline@education.gov.au))



- follow and comply with the *Dealing with Complaints Policy* when matters are raised regarding Child Safety and Wellbeing
- have a solid understanding of the QDPA's policies and procedures, Child Safe Standards and the ECA Code of Ethics. If uncertain about the content of any policy or procedure with which they must comply, employees should seek clarification from the Nominated Supervisor or Approved Provider
- be courteous and responsive when dealing with colleagues, students, visitors, children, and families.
- work collaboratively with colleagues and recognise and value diversity.
- be mindful of their duty of care towards themselves and others.
- be positive role models for children at all times.
- ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of racism within QDPA.
- adhere to the *Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol-Free Policy*
- respect the confidential nature of information gained about each child enrolled in our Preschool(s)
- engage in critical reflection to inform individual and collective decision making and ensure continual improvement, including a review of Child Safe policies and procedures.

### Employees will NOT:

- use abusive, derogatory, or offensive language.
- engage in conduct that is detrimental to the professional standing of the Association, is improper or unethical, is an abuse of power, or harasses, discriminates against, victimises, humiliates, intimidates, or threatens other educators, staff members, volunteers, or visitors at the Preschool(s), either directly or indirectly via information technology such as email, text, or social media. Additionally, they will not support those who do this.
- condone or participate in illegal, unsafe, or abusive behaviour towards children, including physical, sexual, or psychological abuse, ill-treatment, neglect, or grooming.
- exaggerate or trivialise child abuse issues.
- fail to report information to the approved provider if they know a child has been abused.
- engage in unwarranted and inappropriate touching involving a child.
- persistently criticise and/or denigrate a child.
- verbally assault a child or create a climate of fear.
- encourage a child to communicate with me in a private setting.
- share details of sexual experiences with a child
- use sexual language or gestures in the presence of children.
- discriminate against any child, because of culture, race, ethnicity, or disability.



- put children at risk of abuse- refusing food/play, making threats, exposing children to inappropriate language or material (movies, internet, photos)
- show preferential behaviour towards any child.
- accept an offer of money, regardless of the amount.
- seek or accept a bribe.
- acquire personal profit or advantage because of their position (e.g., using QDPA information)
- exchange any property of QDPA for own use unless properly authorised.
- approach other employees, managers, or visitors directly on individual matters that are irrelevant to them.
- engage in any action in breach of our *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, including but not limited to disclosure of confidential Association or customer information, or the improper or illegal use of that confidential information. Authorised persons will only access confidential information for the purpose intended.
- engage in or support any action in breach of QDPA policies and/or procedures.

### EXPECTATIONS OF LEADERS AND MANAGEMENT

In addition to the above responsibilities, leaders and management are expected to:

- promote a collaborative and interconnected workplace by developing a positive working environment where all employees can contribute to the ongoing continuous improvement of the Preschool(s) and Association.
- promote leadership by working with employees and providing opportunities for professional development and growth.
- provide flexible opportunities to ensure all employees can participate in staff meetings and professional development.
- provide ongoing support and feedback to employees.
- keep employees informed about essential information and any relevant changes and make all documents readily accessible to them.
- ensure copies of the ECA Code of Ethics and Child Safe Standards are available to staff and families.
- model professional behaviour at all times whilst at the Preschool(s)
- implement supportive and effective communication systems, consulting employees in appropriate decision making.
- take appropriate action if a breach of the code of conduct occurs.
- share skills and knowledge with employees.
- give encouragement and constructive feedback to employees, respecting the value of different professional approaches.



- follow recruitment policies and procedures to ensure all potential candidates undergo appropriate background checks, including Working with Children Checks (WWCC)
- model and provide guidance to educators and staff to ensure compliance with a zero tolerance of racism within the Service.

### REPORTING A BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

- all employees are required by law to undergo a Working with Children Check (WWCC) which is verified by the employer to ensure it is valid and current.
- if employees become aware of a serious crime committed by another employee, they are required to report it to management as per the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- as mandatory reporters, all employees must report possible risk of harm to children or young persons to management and/or Child Protection authority.
- employees will report any concerns they may have about inappropriate actions of any other employee that involves children or young people to management as per the *Reportable Conduct Scheme*
- management will report any allegations or child related misconduct as per their legislative requirements (this may include reporting the matter to the Police, Department of Communities and Justice and the Office of the Children's Guardian in NSW).

### MANAGING CONFLICT IN THE WORKPLACE

#### MANAGEMENT WILL:

- remain objective and impartial when managing conflict in the workplace.
- be responsive and address a possible breach of the code of conduct by any employee as soon as they are aware of the breach.
- investigate all allegations which may result in remedial action, or disciplinary action ranging from a caution to dismissal.
- consider all relevant facts and make decisions or take actions fairly, ethically, consistently, and with transparency. If they are uncertain about the appropriateness of a decision or action, they will consider:
  - whether the decision or conduct is lawful
  - whether the decision or conduct is consistent with QDPA policies and objectives
  - whether there will be an actual, potential, or perceived conflict of interest involving obligations that could influence the business relationship or conflict with business duties.



## ADHERING TO SERVICE CONFIDENTIALITY

- Unless authorised to do so by legislation, employees must not disclose or use any confidential information without appropriate approval.
- Lawful sharing of information with other parties must be to promote the wellbeing or safety of children and adhere to guidelines under Child and Family Information Sharing Schemes
- All employees are to ensure that confidential information is not accessed by unauthorised people.
- Employees will adhere to the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*.

## BABYSITTING

- QDPA does not provide babysitting services outside normal operating hours.
- Should employees undertake private babysitting arrangements with families, QDPA takes no responsibility for any private arrangements between staff members and the family. However, we do expect staff to inform the Executive Officer if they are babysitting or caring for a child that attends any of QDPA's Preschools.
- Should employees undertake private babysitting arrangements we require employees and families to sign a copy of the Code of Conduct and complete a '*Out of Hours Babysitting Agreement Waiver*' which will we keep in the child and staff member's file (see *Out of Hours Babysitting Policy*)
- All staff are bound by contract to the Service's *Privacy and Confidentiality Policy*, where they are unable to discuss any issues regarding QDPA, other staff members, parents/families, or other children.

## RECORD KEEPING

- Employees and Management will maintain full, accurate, and honest records as required by the Education and Care Services National regulations.
- Managers have a responsibility to ensure that employees comply with their record keeping obligation outlined in the *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*
- Employees must not destroy records without permission from management.
- Records must be retained and stored securely as per our *Record Keeping and Retention Policy*

## DUTY OF CARE

- Management and employees have a responsibility to take reasonable care for the health and safety of themselves and others at the workplace to enable compliance with the work health and safety legislation outlined in the *Work Health and Safety Policy*
- Duty of Care relates to both physical and psychological wellbeing of individuals.





- Management and employees must always provide adequate supervision of children and ensure the health, safety and welfare of children and young people in their care. This includes taking all reasonable action to protect children and young people from risk of harm that can be reasonably predicted.

### APPROPRIATE USE OF ELECTRONIC COMMUNICATION AND SOCIAL NETWORKING SITES

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

- As a Child Safe Organisation, QDPA has the responsibility to ensure children and educators are protected from harm when they engage in with digital technology including social media.
- Strict guidelines for the use of social media are outlined in our *Social Media Policy*
- QDPA offers its current enrolled families and staff members access to the OWNA app as a communication tool.
- Each Preschool has an active Facebook page sharing highlights and special events. The administrator of the account is the Preschool Nominated Supervisor.
- QDPA has an active Facebook page sharing information from the individual Preschool Facebook pages and other community information. The administrator of the account is QDPA's Executive Officer.
- The Administrator controls the content on the page and ensures that the postings are relevant and respectful of the Preschool, Association, the children, the staff, families, and greater community.
- Staff members who have a personal Facebook account are not permitted to post any negative comments relating to QDPA, children, colleagues, or families.
- Staff members are to use their own personal discretion when adding a family of the Association as a 'friend' on Facebook. QDPA does not recommend staff to add families of the Association as they will be seen still as a representative of QDPA and held to QDPA's Code of Conduct on all posts on their private 'wall' if families have access.
- Families are asked in our *Social Media Policy* to respect that staff may have a personal policy on adding families due to their professional philosophy and that QDPA does not recommend staff to have families as friends on their private account.
- Staff members are not permitted to request the 'friendship' of families from the Association.

#### PERSONAL PHONE CALLS/MOBILE PHONES/SMART WATCHES

We are mindful that educators have a duty of care to ensure children are protected from potential risk of harm. It is imperative that all employees of QDPA provide children with their full attention, ensuring supervision is always maintained and remains on the children.

- employees are not authorised to use the Preschool phones for personal reasons unless in the case of an emergency or with permission from management.



- no personal mobile phones are to be used, checked, or brought on the floor during rostered working hours.
- mobile phones are to be kept inside employee's bags which will be placed in a designated, secure location for safe keeping.
- employees are not permitted to use smartwatches to access emails and social media during working hours. Smart watches are only to be used for viewing the time.
- if it becomes apparent that educators are using their Smart watches to check and respond to messages during shifts, they will be asked to either leave them at home or place in a designated locker / secure location until the end of their shift.
- personal mobile phones and Smart watches may be used during shift breaks when employees are free from work and supervision duties. They are not to be used in general sight of children unless a situation arises where there is an emergency.
- personal mobile phones are not to be used to take photos of children as this is a breach of children's privacy. (Service iPads/cameras/devices may be used if it's for the purposes of 'observations' etc.)
- children are at no time to be given access to staff mobile phones.
- educators and staff are not to contact families or children of the Association for personal reasons.
- if, for personal reasons a staff member needs to remain contactable from someone outside the Preschool they should ensure that the situation is explained to management and that the Preschool's primary contact details are passed on to the persons/family outside the Preschool.
- In the event of an emergency, staff personal mobile phones may be retrieved and taken to relevant evacuation/lockdown points, but must only be used in accordance to Preschool evacuation/lockdown procedures

### SERVICE EMAIL

- Email is to be used only for company usage, not for private communications.
- Passwords and access privileges are strictly confidential and to be used only by the educator issued with that access, or persons delegated to know and use that access in the normal course of operation.
- It is the responsibility of the authorised user to take fair and reasonable steps to ensure the passwords and other forms of access are held safe.
- Employees are to be aware that their QDPA email account may be accessed by Management at any time.

### USE OF ALCOHOL, DRUGS AND TOBACCO

- Smoking is NOT permitted in or on surrounding areas of the Preschool(s)



## QUEANBEYAN & DISTRICT PRESCHOOL ASSOCIATION

- It is expected that the odour of cigarette smoke will not be detected on an employee's clothing. If an employee is found smoking on the premises, that employee's employment may be terminated. QDPA supports the [Smoke Free Environment Act 2000](#). QDPA and its employees will follow all conditions outlined in this act.
- QDPA is bound by the Education and Care Services National Regulations. Alcohol, drugs, or other substance abuse by employees can have serious adverse effects on their own health and the safety of others. As such, all employees must not:
  - consume alcohol nor be under the influence of alcohol while working.
  - use or possess illegal drugs at any workplace.
  - drive a vehicle, having consumed alcohol or suffering from the effects of illegal substances, or
  - bring alcohol or any illegal drugs onto the premises.
- If a co-worker suspects a colleague to be affected by drugs or alcohol, they must inform the Nominated Supervisor immediately. No employee will be allowed to work under the influence of drugs or alcohol. (See: *Tobacco, Drugs and Alcohol-Free Policy*)
- Employees undergoing prescribed medical treatment with a controlled substance that may affect the safe performance of their duties are required to report this to the Nominated Supervisor.
- All issues pertaining to these matters shall be kept strictly confidential. A breach of this policy may initiate appropriate action including the termination of employment.

### DRESS CODE

- All employees must adhere to our dress code supplied during induction including the display of their name badge whilst on shift.
- Safe and practical footwear is to be worn to avoid slips, trips, and other potential accidents. Bare feet in certain circumstances is appropriate, for example, in the sandpit or mud play.
- Enclosed footwear must be worn when working in kitchen/kitchenette environments and undertaking food preparation.
- Clothes must be suitable for free movement, active play, and messy play.
- No offensive logos or political statements are to be displayed on clothing.
- Jewellery is worn at your own risk and must not pose any risk of injury to a child, for example, high set sharp rings.

### PERSONAL HYGIENE

All employees are to adhere to the following standards:

- long hair is to be clean and neatly tied back when preparing any food.



- fingernails are to be clean and well groomed.
- employees will follow appropriate oral hygiene practices.
- an appropriate deodorant/antiperspirant will be worn.
- strong perfumes will not be worn as they may cause allergic reactions in children.

### BREACH OF THE CODE OF CONDUCT

All staff members are made fully aware that the following breaches of the Code of Conduct and role responsibilities may result in disciplinary action which may lead to termination of employment:

- reporting to work under the influence of alcohol or drugs
- refusal to complete mandated professional training.
- possessing or selling drugs at the Service
- immoral, immature, or indecent conduct while at the Preschool
- inappropriate use of company equipment and/or resources
- refusing to work as reasonably directed.
- possessing a dangerous weapon whilst at the Service
- bringing disrepute to QDPA
- causing disruption or discontent in the relationship between a family and QDPA
- disclosure of confidential information
- falsifying documentation
- associating with families without disclosing this information with management
- stealing, abusing, defacing, or destroying company property
- interfering with work schedules
- falsification of reports, documents, or wages information
- failure to report for work without notice.
- walking off the job
- failure to follow policies and procedures.
- vulgarity or disrespectful conduct to families, management, or colleagues
- making or publishing false, vicious, or malicious statements about any employee of QDPA, or QDPA itself
- failure to hand in lost property (this is regarded as stealing): Lost property is to be handed to the Nominated Supervisor or Executive Officer
- unable to maintain or hold a current Working with Children Check/Clearance



## DISCIPLINARY ACTION

All staff members are made fully aware that continued abuse of the following may result in disciplinary action. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- unauthorised absence
- having personal visitors whilst on shift
- continued personal phone calls.
- unauthorised solicitation or distribution of money or materials
- poor work standard
- carelessness
- low level of enthusiasm
- lack of personal cleanliness
- taking excessive breaks
- failure to report health, fire, or safety hazards.
- repeated tardiness

## CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT/REFLECTION

The *Code of Conduct Policy* will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis in conjunction with children, families, staff, educators, and management.

## SOURCES

*Anti-Discrimination Act*: See <https://raisingchildren.net.au/disability/disability-rights-the-law/law/anti-discrimination-laws> for Acts for specific Australian states and territories.

Australian Children's Education & Care Quality Authority. (2014).

Australian Human Rights Commission <https://www.humanrights.gov.au/our-work/childrens-rights>

Early Childhood Australia Code of Ethics. (2016).

*Fair Work Act 2009* (Cth).

Guide to the Education and Care Services National Law and the Education and Care Services National Regulations. (2017).

Guide to the National Quality Framework. (2017) (Amended 2020).

Government of South Australia Human Services [Child safe environments](#)

National Principles for Child Safe Organisations

NSW Government Office of the Children's Guardian *Code of Conduct- a guide to developing child safe Codes of Conduct*. (2020).

*Ombudsman Act 2001* (Cth).

*Privacy and Personal Information Protection Act 1998* (Cth).

Revised National Quality Standard. (2018).



Victoria State Government. (2021). Family Violence Multi-Agency Risk Assessment and Management Framework.

Victoria State Government. (2022). Families, Fairness and Housing. Resources for Child Safe Standards

[Western Australian Education and Care Services National Regulations](#)

*Work Health and Safety Act 2011* (Cth).

*Workplace Relations Act 1996* (Cth).

Work Place Law <https://www.workplacelaw.com.au/getting-your-mobile-phone-policies-right/>

## REVIEW

Version Control	Date	Author	Description of Change
1.0	2013	QDPA	Original document
2.0	Feb 2021	QDPA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Document reviewed with change in leadership team in 2021. Additional related regulations &amp; NQS references added.</li> <li>Version control and description box added to clarify reviewed items/new inclusions.</li> <li>Format change to include policy statement, purpose, scope and implementation, addition of footers and page numbering and general layout changes.</li> <li>Addition of Child Safe Standards and Reportable Conduct Scheme</li> <li>Additional of section- "Employees will NOT.... in place of former references to behaviours that were in conflict with values.</li> <li>Addition of expectations for employees, leaders/management</li> <li>Addition of social media, mobile phones expectations</li> </ul>
3.0	April 2022	QDPA	<p>Scheduled Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No changes required.</li> <li>Sources checked for currency</li> </ul>
4.0	April 2023	QDPA	<p>Scheduled Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>policy maintenance –</li> <li>Added dress code inclusion.</li> <li>Added personal hygiene inclusion.</li> <li>Added babysitting inclusion.</li> <li>hyperlinks checked and repaired as required.</li> <li>Continuous improvement section added</li> </ul>